



## THE MIDDLE WAY

Refurbishing the interior of a gutted Norfolk cottage as a homage to Mid-century Modern British design inspired Angie Lewin and her husband Simon to open a shop devoted to the same period. By Daisy Bridgewater. Photographs by Bill Batten



If you can find the Norfolk cottage of the printmaker Angie Lewin and her husband, Simon, consider yourself blessed. It stands in a hamlet so small you don't know you're there till you have left, with no signposts to make you any the wiser. Set back from the road, the former row of crofters' cottages – now a single dwelling – is reached across a gloriously unkempt meadow garden. However, the cottage's name, St Jude's, painted architectural grey on a small sign in lower case, is a discreet invitation to leave any preconceptions of cosy rural living at the door;

Inside the thick wattle-and-daub walls the couple have created a quiet and unexpected homage to Mid-century Modern British design. No flea-bitten armchairs, no squashy sofas, no

standard lamps, but a pure and coherent design sensibility uncommon in this part of Norfolk.

The couple never meant it to be this way. Having moved from Hackney in east London to the Norfolk coast at Weybourne seven years ago, they were busy carving out professional lives for themselves away from the capital. Angie, who had studied fine art printmaking at St Martins, found herself inspired by skeletal plant forms and seed-heads set against the bleak East Anglian skies, and began producing linocuts and wood engravings. Simon, a graphic designer, was building up his web design client base. Neither had thought about moving again. 'I spotted the cottage advertised in the *East Anglian Daily Press* and it just kept niggling at me,' Simon explains. 'Then it reappeared

a couple of months later, so we decided to visit.' It was summer 2003 and the front garden was carpeted in poppies. Despite its being a mere shell (the previous owner had gutted the interior for development), the Lewins were smitten.

It is hard to imagine now that three years ago the subtly decorated interior was nothing more than garden slabs and a dirt floor, but the closer one looks at the cottage's detailing, the clearer it becomes that it was all specified by the same exacting minds. 'The initial phase was very time-consuming,' Simon says. 'It needed digging out, damp-proofing, plumbing and wiring. From there we had to source everything from the doors to the light switches.'

The view from my plywood stool at the Formica

**In the kitchen, cupboards and drawer fronts have all been left natural ply, their edges rounded and fixtures hidden**

**Clockwise from bottom left** the traditional red brick of St Jude's belies its Modernist interior; a 1950s-inspired contemporary wicker chair from the Pier ([pier.co.uk](http://pier.co.uk)) with a cushion covered in Dandelion One (designed by Angie Lewin for St Jude's, £30 per metre) in the living area; bent plywood stools by Corin Mellor and a Formica table by Anthony George add to the plywood kitchen by Stuart MacCallum (07884-314549)